

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for streaming a media file over a distributed information system to a
2 client computer running a browser application, the method comprising the steps of:
3 receiving a request for a particular media file from a client computer,
4 providing a metafile, whereby said metafile contains information about the
5 identification, location and format of the media file,
6 returning said metafile back to said client computer,
7 characterized in that
8 the step of receiving a request for a particular media file from a client computer
9 further comprises the steps of :
10 intercepting a download request for the actual media file and
11 reinterpreting said download request in a request for receiving a corresponding
12 metafile.
- 1 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of reinterpreting said
2 download request includes the step of deriving information about said corresponding
3 metafile from a portion of the URL.
- 1 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein said portion of the URL is the file
2 extension of the requested media file.
- 1 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing a metafile
2 comprises the steps of:
3 dynamically generating a metafile, and
4 statically querying a metafile.
- 1 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of reinterpreting said
2 download request includes the step of:
3 checking predefined filter criteria determining of whether or not a metafile is to
4 be returned instead of the requested media file.

1 6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing a metafile further
2 includes the step of retrieving information about the configuration of at least one item
3 chosen from the group comprising: version of the streaming product, type of the
4 streaming product, location of the media file, load of the servers, load of the network,
5 location of the client, quality of service.

1 7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of providing a metafile further
2 includes the step of reading information about the client's preferred streaming format and
3 forming a metafile in accordance with the client's preference.

1 8. A device for streaming a media file over a network, the device comprising:
2 a network interface for communicating to a web client,
3 an HTTP protocol handler for handling HTTP requests and
4 means for providing metadata for initiating the streaming of a media file,
5 wherein said metadata is returned to said web client in response to a request for
6 said media file.

1 9. The device according to claim 8, wherein the means for providing metadata is
2 formed by a metadata generator.

1 10. The device according to claim 8, wherein the means for providing metadata is
2 formed by a metadata query component.

1 11. A computer-readable program stored on a computer-readable medium, said
2 computer readable program being configured to perform the steps of:
3 receiving a request for a particular media file from a client computer,
4 providing a metafile, whereby said metafile contains information about the
5 identification, location and format of the media file,
6 returning said metafile back to said client computer,
7 characterized in that
8 the step of receiving a request for a particular media file from a client computer
9 further comprises the steps of :
10 intercepting a download request for the actual media file and
11 reinterpreting said download request in a request for receiving a corresponding
12 metafile.

1 12. The computer-readable program of claim 11, wherein the step of reinterpreting
2 said download request includes the step of deriving information about said corresponding
3 metafile from any portion of the URL.

1 13. The computer-readable program of claim 12, wherein said portion of the URL is
2 the file extension of the requested media file.

1 14. The computer-readable program of claim 11, wherein the step of providing a
2 metafile comprises the steps of:
3 dynamically generating a metafile, and
4 statically querying a metafile.

1 15. The computer-readable program of claim 11, wherein the step of reinterpreting
2 said download request includes the step of:
3 checking predefined filter criteria determining of whether or not a metafile is to
4 be returned instead of the requested media file.

1 16. The computer readable program of claim 11, wherein the step of providing a
2 metafile further includes the step of retrieving information about the configuration of at
3 least one item chosen from the group comprising: version of the streaming product, type
4 of the streaming product, location of the media file, load of the servers, load of the
5 network, location of the client, quality of service.

1 17. The computer readable program of claim 11, wherein the step of providing a
2 metafile further includes the step of reading information about the client's preferred
3 streaming format and forming a metafile in accordance with the client's preference.